

Zillionaire 721

Chapter 721 I Didn't Get Much Rest Last Night

When she heard the police officer's words, lacey's face lit up with relief Ceeat, I'm on my way"

She told Cayles to bring Zander back to their hotel ahead of ter, then stepped out onto the curb to flag down a cab and made her way to the police station

During the ride, Linsey's hands were tightly decked, her nerves on edge over Zenia's safety.

Her thoughts were chackic, pozzet over the Lexity of the bad man Zander had mentioned and cutous about who had taken Zenia to the police

Arting at the police station, litsey buried out of the cab and into the building. She quickly found Zenia sitting beside a policewoman

Zenta legged into Linsey's arms, and as she inhaled her mother's familiar scent, tears began to flow freely.

Linsey softly stroked Zenia's back and said, "Everything's okay now. Mommy's here, so there's no need to be

After a moment, she gently pulled back to inspect Zenia carefully. "Are you alright? Did you get hurt?"

Zenia, her eyes tearful, shook her head

At that point, the policewoman interjected, I've examined your daughter, and she's fine. Just make sure to keep a closer eye on her. Fortunately, a good Samaritan brought her in."

"I truly appreciate it. I'm so sorry for causing any trouble," said Linsey, her tone full of gratitude. Without wasting a moment, she followed up with a question. "Would you happen to know the name of the person who helped my daughter?"

Linsey couldn't shake the feeling that if that kind stranger hadn't stepped in, Zenia might have ended up in

real danger.

That thought alone made her determined to find them and express her gratitude face-to-face.

The policewoman paused briefly before responding, "I'm sorry, but the individual chose to remain anonymous. However, I must say, he seemed like someone not easily crossed. But now that your daughter is safe, perhaps it's best to let it be." Upon hearing this, Linsey nodded her understanding and quickly left with Zenia

She felt frustrated that Zander and Zenia had been so reckless to sneak out that early. Determined to address

this, she planned a serious discussion with them for later.

While Collin was heading to the company, he remained completely unaware of everything that had unfolded

after he left.

He had an urgent meeting to attend and, having ensured Zenia was safe at the police station, he had no choice

but to leave.

Changing into a fresh suit while in the car, Collin reflected on his short time with Zenia, feeling an unexpected sense of solitude.

Zenia's vibrant and intelligent nature reminded him of Linsey.

He found himself wondering, almost wistfully, if he and Linsey had had a child in those days, maybe their little girl would have been every bit as sweet and charming as Zenia.

With a self-mocking smile, he dismissed the thought, murmuring to himself, "How could that even be possible?" By the time Collin stepped into his top-floor office, he finally caught sight of Dustin, who had been off the radar since last night.

Dustin was slouched on the sofa, deep in his own head, so distracted he didn't even look up when Collin approached.

Caught off guard by the unusual silence, Collin raised his voice just enough to pull him back. "Hey, whatever's eating at you can wait. We've got a meeting to get through first."

Dustin, jolted from his thoughts, stared at Collin briefly before saying, "Oh, yes. Of course."

Throughout the meeting, Collin noticed Dustin's mind wandering. Despite several board members engaging him with questions, Dustin seemed elsewhere.

Finally, Collin was unable to tolerate it any longer, his tone becoming stern as he said, "Dustin, should I throw some water on you to wake you up?"

The coldness in his voice was evident, making everyone tense.

Given Collin's recent irritability, the board was surprised Dustin would allow himself to be so distracted.

Sensing the shift in tone, Dustin gave his cheek a quick slap, shook off the haze, and pulled himself back into focus. "No, that won't be necessary. Apologies, I didn't get much rest last night."

Chapter 722 Is This About

Dolores

Collin gave Dustin a dismissive look, then gestured to the board member and said, "Please proceed."

As soon as the meeting was over and the others were heading out, Collin's stern voice halted them. "Dustin, my office, now."

A collective shudder went through the room at his command.

The group was certain Dustin was in for a severe reprimand.

Dustin trailed behind Collin into the office, his expression distant and unfocused, completely unaware of the thoughts running through everyone else's minds.

Once the office door shut behind them, Dustin overheard Collin on the phone. "Contact the boxing gym. I'm bringing someone along shortly."

The moment he heard those words, Dustin jolted back to awareness, his voice laced with panic as he asked, "Collin, you're not actually thinking of dragging me to the boxing gym, are you?"

Collin adjusted his tie and responded coldly, "You need to sharpen up. We can't afford your lack of focus with the workload we have."

Just then, a knock came at the door. "Boss, the gym is prepared for your arrival. Shall we go now?" Dustin's panic surged, and his first thought was escape. "Collin, hold on, I suddenly feel quite ill..." "Let's go," Collin said firmly, grabbing Dustin by the collar and steering him forcefully out of the office. Three hours later, Dustin lay exhausted and soaked in sweat on the gym mat.

He lay there with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, his mind frozen, too shaken to begin processing everything he had just endured.

Collin, drenched in sweat as well, stood off to the side with a calm that didn't match the scene.

Without a flicker of emotion, he glanced down at Dustin, who was struggling for air, then peeled off his gloves at an unhurried pace. "Get up."

Fear washed over Dustin's face, but he couldn't even lift a hand to protest. "I can't do it, Collin. I messed up. Just let me off the hook. If this keeps going, it's going to kill me."

Collin gave him a distant look, then sat down abruptly on the gym floor, stripping off his gloves and flinging

them to the side.

Just then, his assistant arrived with two water bottles, handing them to Collin who casually threw one to Dustin.

Startled by the unexpected toss, Dustin exclaimed, "Collin, you're really-"

"What are you trying to say?" Collin asked, a hint of challenge in his tone.

Dustin hesitated, then quietly unscrewed the cap of his water bottle and took a sip.

Moments later, Collin's voice dropped to a whisper as he said, "I hope this won't happen again."

Dustin understood right away that Collin was calling him out for spacing out during the meeting. "Yeah, I know. I'm not myself today. I'm sorry."

"Is this about Dolores?" said Collin, tossing the question out so easily that Dustin jolted up like someone had yanked a string tied to his spine.

"How did you know?" Dustin's shock was evident, his mind racing with paranoia.

Collin sneered, "You disappeared with Dolores after the banquet last night. You think people wouldn't notice?" Dustin's face turned red with embarrassment. "You seem to catch everything, don't you, Collin?"

Taking a breath, Dustin looked at Collin and said, "What if, hypothetically, I ended up spending the night with someone?"

"If you're into Dolores, you can ask her out," Collin suggested.

Dustin's cheeks burned with embarrassment at the straightforward response.

However, just a second after, he let out a faint, rueful smile and said, "But I have a feeling she doesn't see it that way..."

Moments later, Collin said firmly, "Then you should try harder."

With that, Collin got to his feet and started walking away.

Watching him go, Dustin murmured in disbelief, "But I tried my hardest last

night..."

Chapter 723 I Won't Do It Again

Before Dustin could finish his thought, another water bottle flew at him. It smacked him hard, and he cried out

in pain

Collin, at a loss for words, said, "I was trying to say that you should really try harder to win her over. What were you thinking?"

Linsey had just returned to the hotel with Zenia when Zander and Caylee rushed over, their faces full of worry.

"Zenia!" Zander called out.

"Are you okay? Did you get hurt?" Caylee inquired with concern.

Zenia's heart settled the moment she saw her mother. "I'm fine," she addressed Zander and Caylee.

Zander breathed out in relief. But then, his eyes shifted to Linsey. Her expression was cold. "Mommy..." he called gently.

Linsey said nothing. She walked straight to the sofa, ignoring him.

Zander's and Zenia's smiles faded. Their eyes dropped, a trace of hurt showing. Caylee bit her lip, clearly torn.

After a pause, she took the kids' hands and led them over to Linsey.

They stood quietly in front of her-one adult and two children-waiting to see how she would react.

The room went quiet. The silence stretched. Finally, Zenia couldn't hold it in.

She stepped closer, tugged at Linsey's sleeve, and asked in a soft voice, "Mommy, what's wrong?"

Linsey looked down at Zenia's nervous little face, then over at Zander, who stood stiffly with a tense look. Her voice cracked as she spoke. "Why did you two go out by yourselves this morning? And why did you go so far?"

She remembered that the coffee shop was near CR Corporation. It was nowhere near their hotel.

She couldn't understand why the kids had wandered off that far.

Caylee's heart sank. Guilt washed over her.

She was the one who had talked about Collin and those places last night.

But she never thought the kids would actually sneak out the next day to find him.

Too much had happened. Things could have gone terribly wrong.

Caylee feared that if Linsey found out she was the reason bekundit, she would be

com

Rather than wait to be exposed, Caylee thought it best to tell the truth besser

But before she could say a word, Zandey suddenly stepped forward More F just wanted to have some fun. It's boring in the boted"

Caylee froze. Her hands clenched without thinking whatever courage shed tissyyexuel

She didn't understand why Zander hid the truth.

Her brows furrowed. She stood there, unsure of what to do.

Linsey let out a tired sigh. "I never said you couldn't go out and play. But you're both state & you want to go out, you need an adult with you. I wasn't busy today. I could've taken you had is custos Cafe would've gone. But slipping out without telling anyone?"

By the end, her voice shook. Her eyes shimmered with tears as she took their hats. I sing happened to you... I wouldn't have been there to save you."

Zenia's lips trembled. Seeing her mother so upset broke her heart. I'm sorry, Mommy wong and it again."

She leaned in slowly, wrapping her small arms around Linsey as tears streamed down bar chees

Zander's eyes were tearful too, but he blinked fast, trying hard not to cry.

Chapter 724 I Never Wanna Leave You, Mommy

Zander pressed his lips together, trying to appear braver than he felt. "Mommy, it was my fault I shouldn't have taken Zenia out running around"

Linsey gently dabbed away Zenia's tears with a soft tissue, then reached for Zander and wrapped both children tightly in het arms, holding them close against her heart.

Her voice was calm and tender when she finally spoke. "I'm not scolding you. I just need you to promise you won't scare me like that again."

The two kids noddod earnestly, their voices chiming together. "We promise we won't!"

A faint smile touched Linsey's lips at their sincerity.

No matter how she tried, she could never bring herself to be too harsh with them.

Yes, mistakes had to be acknowledged-but she didn't want them to be afraid of her.

That was the quiet vow she repeated to herself again and again.

After all, Zenia and Zander were growing up without a father. So Linsey wanted only to fill their world with as much warmth and love as she possibly could, making sure they felt just as cherished and whole as any other

kids.

With that thought softening her gaze, she gently patted their heads and said, "I know living in a hotel room isn't very comfortable, so..."

Zander's eyes lit up in an instant, and he bounced on his toes. "Mommy, are we going home?"

Even Caylee looked surprised by the question.

She had assumed Linsey planned to leave Grester, which would have meant she wouldn't have to go through with what Gorman had asked of her.

The idea of betraying Linsey again made her stomach twist.

But Linsey let out a soft laugh, brushing a loose strand of hair behind her ear. "Grester is our home. I grew up here-and from now on, this is where the two of you will live, too."

Zander's expression faltered at once. His shoulders slumped as he murmured, "Okay then."

But the pout didn't last long. His eyes gleamed again a moment later. "Then I want to live where you grew up for a few more years!"

Linsey tilted her head, her smile full of affection. "When you're all grown up, you'll be free to go wherever your heart leads you."

Zenia clung to her mother, smuggling against her cheek, her mother's sweat and the never-ending love of you. Mommy.

Their innocent voices washed away the worry that had been brewing at Lindy's chest

Then, as if a thought had just surfaced, she glanced over at Caylee "Would you come with me in the next few days to check out new places to live?"

But Caylee looked lost, as if her mind were somewhere far away

"Caylee?" Linsey repeated, watching her closely.

Caylee finally blinked and snapped out of it. "Huh? Oh yes, Linsey What's up?"

Linsey narrowed her eyes slightly, sensing that something wasn't quite right-but she brushed it off, assuming Caylee was just exhausted from helping with the kids.

"I was saying we can't stay in a hotel forever. I'm going to start checking out apartments-renting or buying whichever makes sense. As long as it's comfortable and in a good neighborhood, that's all that matters"

Caylee nodded quickly. "Of course. I'll start looking into options ahead of time-see what's available"

"Thank you," Linsey said softly. "You've been working so hard lately. Take the rest of the day to rest-I'll watch

the kids."

Caylee's eyes widened with surprise, and she immediately waved her hands. "No, no, it's really no trouble at all! This is what I'm here for."

She didn't know much about design. The only reason she had become Linsey's assistant was because Linsey had seen something in her-dependability, quiet diligence-and brought her on to help manage orders and occasionally look after the children.

Linsey paid her generously, far more than most assistants earned.

But just before they were supposed to leave for Grester, her grandmother, the only family she had, the woman who had raised her, had fallen gravely ill.

That was when Gorman stepped in. He paid for the surgery-an expensive one Caylee never could have afforded on her own. And ever since, she had always felt indebted to him.

Chapter 725 I'm Staying

Caylee knew she owed Linsey.

She also knew how hard Linsey worked to raise two kids on her own.

Because of that, she couldn't bring herself to ask Linsey for money.

In the end, she had no choice but to agree to Gorman's request-doing only things

that wouldn't harm Linsey or the children, at least on the surface.

Linsey, of course, had no idea what was going through Caylee's mind.

After everything that happened today, she realized one thing-they couldn't keep living in a hotel. Zander and

Zenia needed a bigger, safer space.

A hotel room, no matter how nice, would never feel like home.

Luckily, she had managed to save up a decent amount over the years as Aurora. Now, she could afford to rent a cozy apartment in Grester-a place where the kids could finally feel settled.

Buying a house would take more time and come with a lot of complications.

For now, she decided to start by looking around and take it from there.

"Linsey... Have you really decided to stay in Grester?" Caylee asked gently, still

unsure.

She remembered Linsey saying they wouldn't stay long when they first arrived.

She hadn't expected her to change her mind so soon.

Linsey turned on the TV and found a cartoon for the kids.

Then she nodded, her eyes steady and full of resolve. "I've made up my mind," she said. "I just won first place in the design competition. If I leave now, I might lose out on some big opportunities that come with that. For my career-and for the kids' future-staying here is the right choice."

She paused, then added softly, "Dolores' company is finally getting back on its feet. She hasn't said much, but I know she needs me. And Grester... This is where we grew up. It holds our memories. This city gave me friendship, dreams, and roots. I won't run from it. I'm staying."

When she first came back, Linsey never thought she would stay. The city had once brought her so much pain.

And after she bumped into Collin again last night, the old memories came flooding back.

They stung more than she had expected.

But after a long night of thinking, she came to a simple truth-she wouldn't give up a whole city just because

of one man.

This was her home. Her best friend was here. Her childhood, her career- everything she had built mattered

more than the past. Collin was just a chapter. He didn't get to write the whole story.

And the more she tried to avoid him, the harder it was to truly move on.

She realized that the night she saw him again after four long years.

Now, she believed the only way to heal was to face it all, head-on.

Caylee didn't speak right away. She glanced at Zander and Zenia, then said carefully, "Linsey... What if that person finds out..."

She didn't finish the sentence, but Linsey understood right away.

She smiled gently, calm and unfazed. "Zander and Zenia are my children. No one has the right to take them

away. No one."

The moment she said that, the kids looked away from the screen.

They didn't fully understand, but they could feel something serious in her voice. Quietly, they moved closer and wrapped their arms around her.

"Mommy, we just want to stay with you!" Zenia pouted, her voice loud and sure.

Zander frowned slightly. He was always the thoughtful one. "Mommy, is someone trying to take us? Are they bad people?"

Chapter 726 I Still Keep An Apartment There -

Linsey burst into laughter and soothingly stroked the children's heads. "Don't worry, no one could ever take you two from me. We'll always be together, all right?" she reassured them in a calm tone.

"Yes! We'll always be with Mommy!" exclaimed Zenia, her eyes gleaming with joy and her smile radiating pure

adorableness.

As lunchtime approached, Linsey and Caylee hurriedly prepared a straightforward meal. Satisfied and full, the children soon found it hard to keep their eyes open.

To ensure Caylee had a peaceful rest today, Linsey decided they would nap in her room, allowing Caylee the solitude of the guest room.

After Linsey gently shut her bedroom door, she turned to Caylee with a sudden thought.

"It just occurred to me, I never asked if you'd like to stay here in Grester," Linsey said, her voice tinged with regret. "I realize Grester isn't your home, and your grandmother probably misses you."

As she spoke, she affectionately grasped Caylee's hand. "If you wish to return, I can contact some friends there to help you secure a job. You know, I still keep an apartment there. You and your grandmother can use it until the lease is up, if you like."

Caylee's eyes welled up with tears as she listened. Shaking her head, she responded, "Linsey, you've done so much already. I can't possibly accept more."

Linsey, with the warmth of a sister, tenderly brushed a lock of hair from Caylee's face."

"You've been with me so long. You're like family," she continued. "You've taken such good care of Zenia and Zander. I see everything you do. So please, don't feel guilty. I've paid that apartment's rent already, it's empty and waiting."

"Linsey, I'm not going anywhere!" Caylee said, clutching Linsey's hand. "I want to stay with you and the kids longer."

Linsey's face lit up with a smile. "I'd love that. I just worry about your grandmother. She must miss you." Caylee' looked down, her expression clouded with sorrow.

She hadn't yet shared with Linsey that her grandmother was gravely ill and hospitalized.

She was also keeping a secret about how Gorman had covered the hospital expenses and had her pass on secret messages.

Caylee couldn't bear to think about how Linsey would see her if she ever discovered the things she had done for Gorman.

The mere thought of it sent a nervous shiver through Caylee

"Are you good?" Linsey asked, noticing her discomfort

Caylee quickly looked up. "I'm fine, really."

Linsey looked at her with a worried expression. "You look like hell. Could it be that you're just tired?"

Leading Caylee to the guest room, Linsey opened the door and softly suggested, "Get some rest. We can sort everything else out later. And if you feel unwell, tell me immediately. I'll take you to the doctor"

Tears welled up in Caylee's eyes as she nodded. "Okay."

Linsey didn't push further, assuming that recent fatigue was all that troubled Caylee.

Chapter 727 You're So Brave, Zander

Linsey waited by the door, watching as Caylee slipped into the room. The moment she closed the door, Linsey slipped her phone from her pocket. She sent a message to Dolores, asking when her friend might be free for a

quick meet-up.

After all, it was time Dolores heard the news-she had made up her mind. She was staying in Grester.

Meanwhile, in the quiet room where they were supposed to be fast asleep, two little silhouettes huddled under the covers, wide-eyed and whispering like tiny conspirators.

"Zander, I think that bad guy might actually be... a good person," Zenia murmured. She was thinking about that morning-about Collin-and something in her wanted to defend him.

Zander shot upright, eyes flashing. "But he took you! That's what bad guys do!"

Zenia bit her lip, clearly torn. "But he was nice to me. He didn't yell or get mad. He brought me straight to the police station so Mommy could come get me."

Zander's face scrunched up like a balloon about to pop. "I'm the one who called Mommy. I told her to come

save you!"

Zenia blinked, a little thrown. "But, Zander... you didn't call the police yourself." His face stiffened, eyes flicking away in awkward silence. "Anyway, you were probably tricked. That's what bad guys do they pretend to be nice."

Zenia folded her arms, lips pushed into a pout. Then, as if struck by a wild idea, she leaned in, voice dropping to a dramatic whisper. "You know what? I think... you kind of look like that bad guy."

"What?! Nonsense!" Zander recoiled so fast he nearly fell off the bed. "I don't look like him! He made Mommy cry so much-I'd never make her cry like that!"

Zenia's face fell. "But... when we snuck out this morning, Mommy was really upset."

That hit a nerve. Zander puffed up indignantly. "She was worried, not upset! That's different!"

"Okay," Zenia gave up trying to untangle it all. She said softly, "So what now? Mommy's never gonna let us go out alone again."

Zander fell silent, thinking hard. Then suddenly, his eyes lit up. "I'm gonna settle things with that bad guy myself."

Zenia gasped. "Zander! What are you going to do? He's really tall!"

"I'm not scared of him!" Zander puffed up his chest and balled his tiny fists. "I'll stand up to him like a real

man. I'll make sure he knows he can't hurt Mommy again."

Zenia's lips parted in awe. She looked at her brother like he had grown a superhero cape. "You're so brave,

Zander..."

Dolores arrived not long after Linsey's message had gone out.

The moment she stepped inside, she made a beeline for the water pitcher, pouring herself a glass and downing it like she had crossed a desert. "Ugh, I'm exhausted," she gasped between gulps. "Why is it so hot out today?"

Linsey watched nervously, half-expecting her friend to choke. "Slow down, would you?"

Seeing how flushed and sweaty Dolores was, she quietly fetched a fresh towel and began patting her friend's cheeks with gentle care.

"I told you we could meet whenever it worked for you. Why'd you rush over like this?" Linsey said.

Dolores gave a sheepish smile. "The board was driving me insane. Same useless discussions, going in circles for hours. I couldn't take another second. So I ran away—to here. Consider this my hiding place."

Linsey's brows pulled together in a frown. "They're pressuring you again? Why? I thought your company was doing better this year. Why are they still pestering you with that nonsense?"

Dolores looked away for a beat—just long enough. "No... it's not that."

Chapter 728 When Do I

Start

Linsey knew Dolores too well. So the moment she saw that look flash across her face, she had a feeling it was

about her.

She stopped and stared straight at her. "Spill it. Either you tell me now, or I'll head to your company and ask

the board myself."

"Please don't!" Dolores blurted, then sighed. "Since you helped us win the design competition, the board's been on my neck. They want you as our chief designer. I told them you wouldn't stay in town for long, but they think I'm being stingy-that I'm not offering you enough."

Linsey let out a soft laugh.

Dolores glanced sideways at her, frowning. "How can you still laugh? I turned them down for you, just like you

asked."

That was true. Linsey had told her before-she wasn't planning to stay in Grester.

But things had changed. Just last night, she had made up her mind. And that was exactly what she wanted to

talk to Dolores about.

Still, she couldn't resist teasing her first. Linsey raised an eyebrow. "So... What kind of offer were you planning

to make me?"

Dolores didn't think much of it. She shrugged. "Only the best. Salary's a given. The title might be chief designer, but if you joined, you'd be my second-in-command. Everyone else would report to you."

If people weren't asleep in the next room, Linsey would have burst out laughing.

She cleared her throat. "Oh, come on. I'm not signing up to be your vice president. Chief designer just means I run the design team, right?"

Dolores lifted her chin and gave a little huff. "You're my best friend. That's how I see it. The board thinks I'm being petty. But if they knew what I was really thinking, they'd just drown me in useless advice again."

Linsey smiled and gently wiped the sweat from Dolores' forehead. "Alright then. Since you're offering me such a sweet deal... I accept. So, when do I start?"

Dolores froze. She stared at Linsey, mouth slightly open, struggling to process the words. "You..."

Linsey raised an eyebrow, playing along. "What? Changed your mind already? Don't want me anymore?"

"Of course not!" Dolores shouted, making Linsey jump.

"Shhh! The kids are still sleeping," Linsey pressed a finger to her lips.

Dolores blinked, then snapped out of it. She set down her glass and grabbed Linsey, dragging her to the couch. "But you said a few days ago you'd be leaving. What changed?"

Linsey smiled and began to explain everything she had been thinking.

With Dolores, she never held back. She could speak freely.

When she finished, Dolores was beaming. She nodded quickly. "Good! You finally see that your career comes first-way more important than any guy."

Linsey was amused by her tone.

Still, Dolores wasn't wrong. Linsey had spent so long worrying-afraid that bumping into Collin would stir up old feelings or mess with her head.

But she hadn't done anything wrong back then. There was no reason to hide.

Yes, Collin was powerful. He founded CR Corporation, after all. But that didn't mean he could stop her from chasing her dreams in Grester.

And if he tried? Well, Linsey would just think even less of him. That would only prove he was small-minded.

Chapter 729 Do You Have Feelings For Him.

Dolores lit up the moment she heard the news. "That's wonderful! We don't have to be apart anymore."

Her joy was honest, unguarded. Then, with a small sigh, she admitted, "Truthfully, there were so many moments I wanted to ask you to stay. But I held back-I didn't want my feelings to sway your choice. I wanted it to be yours. So I stayed silent. But now that you've chosen this on your own... I'm genuinely happy."

Linsey offered a soft smile, eyes warm as she met Dolores' gaze. "Thank you, Dolores. For always knowing how

to be there for me."

With a playful huff, Dolores reached out and tapped her finger lightly against Linsey's forehead. "When did you start sounding so formal with me, huh?"

Chuckling, Linsey picked up the towel again and gently resumed dabbing the sweat from Dolores' skin. "I was joking, but you took it seriously."

Dolores tilted her chin obligingly, letting Linsey finish the job.

"Anyway," she murmured, "let's drop the mushy stuff. You and I? We don't need it."

"Understood, boss," Linsey replied with an exaggerated grin, still wiping gently. But then her hand paused. Her smile faded, her gaze fixed on something just below Dolores' collarbone. "Dolores... about last night..."

She trailed off.

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Dolores blinked, thrown by the sudden shift. Something wasn't right.

She followed Linsey's stare, but the angle didn't let her see anything.

Noticing that, Linsey quietly set the towel aside, reached for a mirror on the table, and handed it to her. "Here. Take a look."

Dolores raised the mirror-and immediately spotted the faint red marks along her collarbone.

Her expression froze.

"Oh, crap..." she muttered, visibly annoyed.

When she looked up, Linsey regarded her teasingly.

Dolores, at a loss for words, tossed the mirror back onto the table, avoiding eye-

contact. "It's nothing. Don't make a big deal out of it."

Linsey stared at her, obviously not buying it. "Is that so?"

Dolores sat straighter, bristling. "Of course. Why would I lie to you?"

She shot Linsey a sideways glance, puffed up with mock pride. "I'm a grown woman. Getting laid is perfectly

normal, isn't it?"

Linsey nodded in agreement. "Of course. Totally normal."

Dolores' relief was short lived. Linsey leaned in close and whispered with wicked smile, "So... was it Dustin?"

Dolores nearly jumped out of her skin. She recoiled into the sofa cushions, wide-eyed. "How the hell did you figure that out?!"

Linsey gave an innocent blink. "You told me at the banquet that you were taking Dustin away. Then you vanished. Connect the dots."

She paused, thoughtful now. "Even when I was away from Grester, you'd still tell me random things about him. Stories, little details. That kind of consistency? It means something."

She rubbed her chin as if piecing together a puzzle. "From what I know, Dustin isn't exactly Mr. Sentimental. But he's not careless either. If he's been keeping up with you all this time, I'd say you matter to him. More than

a little."

Dolores looked down, teeth pressing into her lip. "Last night... I think he confessed his feelings."

Linsey's eyes lit up instantly. "So, what? You two just jumped into each other's arms?"

"No!" Dolores groaned, covering her face with one hand. "I was drunk. I didn't even understand what he meant. The whole thing-it just kind of... happened."

Linsey leaned closer again, curiosity written all over her. "So, do you have feelings for him?"

Chapter 730 Dating's Not A Priority

Dolores took a deep breath, straightened up, and spoke seriously, "Honestly, I've never really thought about things like that."

She looked Linsey right in the eye, steady and sure. "The company's just starting to grow. Right now, dating's not a priority. I feel like if I get into a relationship, it'll just take up too much of my time."

She paused, then added, "Besides, I'm still not sure how I feel about Dustin. I've always just seen him as a

friend..."

Linsey gave a gentle nod. "That's okay. Feelings aren't something you rush. Take your time-I'm not going to

push you."

Dolores smiled faintly, and the topic naturally dropped. All of a sudden, she seemed to remember something important. "The reason I took Dustin away last night was because I was worried he'd remember seeing Zander at that restaurant. I mean, Zander looks so much like Collin. If that jerk ever finds out, do you think he'd try to take him away?"

Linsey's face turned serious in a flash. "Zander is my son. If Collin tries to take him, he'll have to go through me first. I won't back down, not for a second."

Dolores looked startled and quickly spoke up. "Let's not panic. Grester's a big place. With any luck, Collin may never run into him."

They chatted for a while longer. Eventually, Dolores glanced at the time and jumped up. She had work to do at

the company.

She grabbed her bag in a hurry. "If you're free tomorrow, drop by the company. We'll sign the contract, and you can start whenever you're ready."

Linsey grinned. "With all the buzz around Aurora, I'd better get started right away. Time to help the company make some real money."

Dolores laughed and high-fived her. "That's the spirit! See you tomorrow then."

"Yeah, see you."

After Dolores left, Linsey stretched a little and started toward her room, hoping to catch a short nap.

But just then, there was a knock at the door.

She paused, thinking Dolores had forgotten something.

She walked over and opened it, starting to say, "Did you forget-"

But the words stopped as soon as she saw Corman's smiling face.

The smile that had just begun to form on Linsey's lips vanished

For a moment, she didn't know what to say.

After everything Gorman had done for her and the kids, she couldn't just shut the door in his face.

But after what he said last night, she also didn't want to send the wrong message again.

While she was still searching for words, Gorman spoke softly. "What? Won't you invite me in?"

He held up a small bag of toys. "I promised Zenia and Zander I'd bring them these today."

Linsey blinked, surprised. She hadn't known he made such a promise.

Still, he was here for the kids.

Whatever was going on between her and Gorman, she didn't want them caught in

the middle. And the truth was, Zenia and Zander liked him a lot.

With that in mind, she stepped aside and opened the door wider. "They're still napping, but they'll be up soon.

Come in "

